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Montana State Fund

Guardian

April 1998

Backfile Conversion Marches Into Spring

Some of the faces have become familiar in the last few months and the temporary employees, who have set up camp in room 303, will be around a little while longer. About a month longer according to Dale DeHart, the man in charge of the operation.

The State Fund was besieged on October 20, 1996, with thirty temporary employees with the mission to scan hundreds of thousands of pieces of paper, and create a virtual paper-free work environment for the State Fund. Of the thirty original employees, only seven are left. Dale points out, "production work is very tedious and we've got to have a certain amount of pages scanned per day. Right now we scan about 35,000 pages a day."

All active policy files are scanned; and these images will be available when PAALS/AMPS comes on-line in October. There are basically four steps in the conversion process:

1. Prep. The prepers pull files, remove staples, repair tears, check the file to ensure the pages belong in the file, and count pages.

2. Batch. The batchers provide quality control. They double-check everything the prepers do, as well as count and divide the pages into categories. Categories include: single-sided pages, multi single-sided pages, duplexed pages, and multi duplexed pages.

3. Audit. The auditors make sure the policy is on the system.

4. Scan.

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Listening Signals

Good listeners ask questions and use these techniques to get all the information they need before they act:

Examples. "Please give me an example so I have a better idea of what you mean."

Illustrations. "Could you illustrate that point to show me how it works?"

Statistics. "What's the date on that information? Can you get more data on that?"

Authorities. "What do the experts say? Do they agree on this?"

Analogies. "Can you compare that to the situation we faced last week?"

Explanations. "What are some of the specific problems you're having right now? Can you explain or give me more details?"

Restatements. "Would you mind repeating that? I want to make sure I've haven't missed anything."

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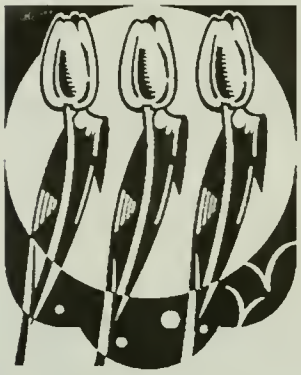
President's Message



Spring is a wonderful time of year when new things begin to grow and new projects are started. At the State Fund, we are taking advantage of new opportunities and starting new projects too. Springtime is by far our busiest season with budgeting, rate making, and strategic business planning, along with our other daily operations. It's also a very exciting time as we wrap up our fiscal year and receive recommendations from our consulting actuary about upcoming rate levels. In addition, we look forward to assessing our year end financial results to determine how we have done compared to our goals.

This year, based on our consulting actuary's recommendations, we are proposing to our Board a 6.7% savings in premiums for State Fund customers. These reductions, if approved, will be implemented July 1, 1998, and include a 3% manual rate decrease and the remainder in additional premium rating discount programs to individual deserving customers. If approved, this would represent the fourth consecutive reduction of State Fund rates since 1996. Overall, the savings to State Fund customers during this four year period is over $144 million. That's impressive!

We are also seeing some impressive results in our FY98 SBP achievements. In this year's business plan we identified 51 short term goals and 226 action plans. Of the 277 total, 127 are complete, 8 are partially complete, and 68 are on schedule. Only 20 goals/action plans are not complete and 54 are behind schedule. It is obvious to me that our staff is deeply committed to achieving the role of industry leader and providing superior customer service. **Thank you for your dedication!**

Employee of the Month

Congratulations to **Barb King**, Executive Assistant in the Legal Department and the March Employee of the Month. She has been a State Fund employee for fifteen years and is always willing and ready to help whoever needs it to get the job done. She has served on several committees during her employment and has contributed in leaps and bounds to any project she is involved in. She is always willing to take on extra duties when people are on vacation or out of the office.

Her coworkers say, "Barb helps keep up morale in our Department by always remembering birthdays and organizing celebrations." They add, "when push comes to shove and deadlines are tight for exchanges, she is always there to pitch in."

Thanks, Barb, for all the effort and dedication you put into your job!

Kudos Kolumn

Steve Brendemihl of Alsaker Corporation/City Service in Bozeman stated that **Myrna Hammond** is always very nice to work with and he is impressed with her work. Steve also said he is very pleased with the State Fund and our service.

Linda from Industrial Bolt & Supply called and said, "Your customer service staff is excellent. Of all states, you are by far the easiest to deal with. You answer the phones quickly and I don't have to leave a message in order to get a real person." Way to go **Customer Service Unit!**

"Thanks to **Debra Brebner, Rita Bird**, and **Barb King** for all their help on various projects. I appreciate your great teamwork on getting them out on time."
—Kim Davis

"Thanks to all the **Special Activities Committee members** for their hard work on planning the breakfast sales."
—Kim Davis

"Thanks to **Lauree Kramer** for the great job she did putting together a letter and safety questionnaire we mailed to 800 employers!"
—Jay Phillips

Kudos to **Diane Pederson** for her work with James Stupack, a State Fund claimant and policyholder. When James suffered a severe injury, he said Diane was a tremendous help. He credits the State Fund, and Diane in particular, with "saving his life, helping him become a productive member of society again, and helping him keep custody of his children." He added that he is a customer for life and believes in the importance of a safety program.

Take Our Daughters to Work

The Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee for Women (ICCW) sponsored Take Our Daughters to Work day on April 23. The day is sponsored on a national level by the Ms. Foundation for Women. Take Our Daughters to Work day is part of a national effort targeted at young teenage girls to help improve their self esteem, lower drop out rates, and promote training and education in a variety of occupations.

A record 112 seventh grade students from Clancy, Montana City, CR Anderson, and Radley schools participated in this year's event. The students shadowed employees from twenty different state agencies.

The day included an opening ceremony at the Capitol during which Governor Racicot, Nancy McCaffree, Judy Martz, Pat Haffey, and Laurie Ekanger welcomed the students. The kids then spent two hours with state employees for a brief introduction to various occupations.

Opening ceremony.

Sharon Williams and her daughter Tara.

Charlie Adams and his daughter Josie.

Training Calendar

Managing Your Time: May 6, 10am-3pm

Conducting Performance Appraisal Interviews: May 12 & 13, 10am-12pm

Charting Your Career: May 19 & 20, 10am-12pm

PPRP Supervisor Training: May 26, 8:30-11:30am

PPRP Employee Training: May 27, 8:30-11:30am

Human Resources

Personnel changes as of April 24, 1998

New Hires

Tiffany David, Claim
Vickie Shapiro, Underwriting
Morgan Hahn, HR
Mike McGrorty, Claim
Paula Lavender, Claim
Karen Beddow, Admin/Finance
Tracy Johnston, HR

Departures

Terri Job
Aimee Wortman
Blaine Gilbert
Lee McBride
John Jiang
Tim Fitzpatrick
Marti Heaton

Special Activities

Stop by the **craft sale**, sponsored by the State Fund Special Activities Committee, on Tuesday, **May 5**! Contact Kelly Stanley if you have crafts to put in the sale. You can also sell a friend or relatives crafts.

It's a great place to find a special Mother's Day gift!

Four C's for Taking Care of Customers

How can we keep existing customers and win back ones we may have lost? Become a "customer caretaker." That's the principle author Mark Holmes defines in his book, *Wooing Customers Back*. Here are four of his caretaking concepts:

Concern. Care about our customers' complete satisfaction. "Customers not only impact job security, but their continued patronage also increases further opportunities and rewards."

Consideration. Good, old-fashioned courtesy and genuine kindness are really appreciated by customers in today's bustling business environment. "Even when you are tired or stressed, act as though you are energetic and cheerful. Customers will be impressed."

Conscientiousness. "Doing what you said when you said you'd do it is essential in earning customers' trust, and that trust is the key to retaining business."

Cooperation. If a co-worker drops the ball, pick it up before the customer is inconvenienced. "How customers are treated overall is the most important factor in keeping them happy."

Continued from page 1.

"It's been a great challenge, and I've learned a lot from the experience," Dale comments on the whole backfile conversion project. He adds he has learned how to deal with personnel issues and learned about systems issues. Dale points out the project has involved many individuals' hard work. "Jim Worthington has been instrumental in keeping us stocked with supplies. Because if we don't have supplies, we don't work. Fred Lubke and Marvin Kraft have also helped as far as electricity and other building issues." Thanks for your support!

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Please call 444-6502 with comments or suggested articles.

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Temporary employees work hard to scan 35,000 pages a day.

Policy Services News

May will be a busy month for Underwriting. On May 1st the Board of Directors should give final approval for FY99 rates and other items which impact FY99 policies. Based on these changes, we begin to create policies for FY99. The following schedule details these activities:

May 1
- Identify policies which qualify for the high loss surcharge to be applied to FY99 premium.
- Assign FY99 rate tier to all active policies.

May 7
- Update FY99 construction credit factors.

May 8
- Load FY99 rates to DB02.
- Create FY99 Estimated Annual Premium for all active policies.

May 11
- Make needed changes to FY99 Estimated Annual Premiums to ensure correct data is reported to the employer on their rate notices.

May 15
- Generate FY99 rate notices to all active policies.

May 19
- Generate letters to notify policyholders of the assignment of a FY99 scheduled credit or debit.

The PAALS Test Team will also receive training in May. Training is tentatively scheduled for the weeks of May 11 and May 18. This training is in preparation for user acceptance testing scheduled for June 1.